

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

March 17, 2004

**SUBJECT:**

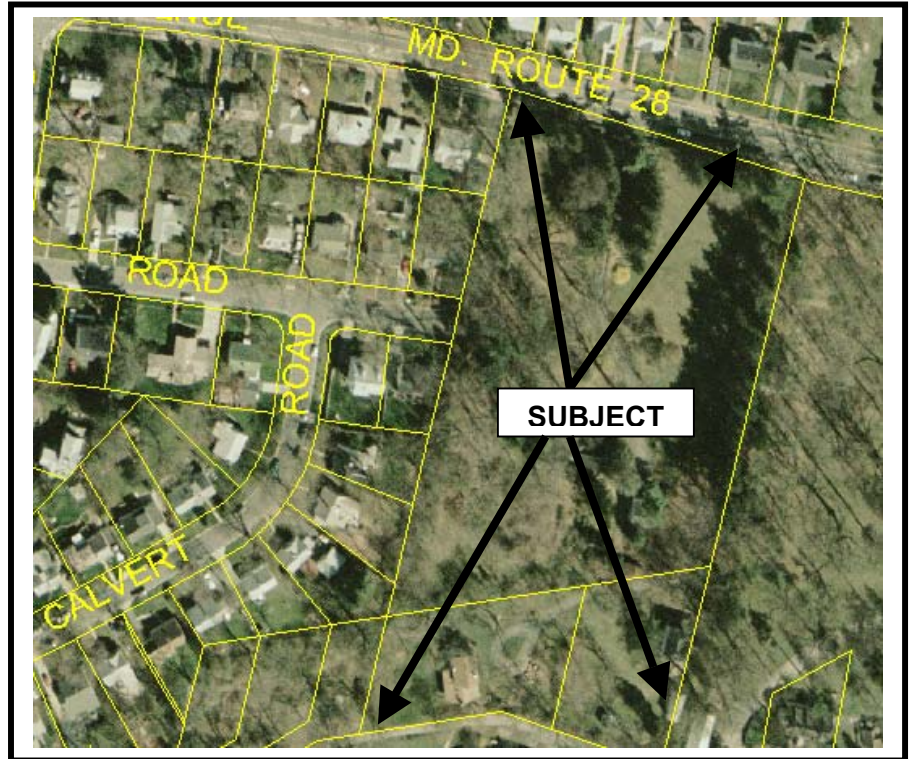
Detailed Application PRU2003-0020A  
for Planned Residential Unit (PRU)  
Development PRU2001-00020,  
Buckingham Property  
House Elevation Approvals

Applicant: NV Homes  
555 Quince Orchard Rd.  
Suite 240  
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Owner: Wycliffe L.C. (Elm Street  
Development Corp.)  
6820 Elm Street, # 200  
McLean, VA, 22101

Date Filed: February 5, 2003

Location: Henson Oaks Lane  
(Formerly 520, 522 and 512 West Montgomery Avenue), adjacent to Chestnut Lodge.  
Formerly referred to as the Buckingham Property.



**REQUEST:**

As per the requirements of PRU2001-00020, and Detailed Application PRU2003-0020A, the Applicant is requesting final approval of the architectural designs of eight single-family homes within the 13-unit Thirty Oaks subdivision.

As part of the application, the Planning Commission also reviewed and approved Architectural Guidelines, which have been incorporated into the Home Owners Association (HOA) documents for this property.

**PREVIOUS RELATED ACTIONS:**

- PRU2001-00020, Exploratory Plan Application for Planned Residential Unit development, approved by the Mayor and Council, October 14, 2002.
- PRU2003-0020A, Detailed Application for Planned Residential Unit development, approved by the Planning Commission, June 25, 2003. Approval included Architectural Design Guidelines for the subdivision.

- MAP2002-00077, Map Amendment to include the three lots of Thirty Oaks that front on West Montgomery Avenue into the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. Approved by the Mayor and Council, November 17, 2003.
- Historic District Commission (HDC) approval of the architectural designs of the three lots of Thirty Oaks that front on West Montgomery Avenue. Approved by the HDC February 19, 2004.

## **RELEVANT ISSUES**

In reviewing the application, the following issues emerged and have been addressed:

- The Planning Commission approved a set of general Architectural Design Guidelines for this project. Staff has reviewed the plans for compliance, and has discussed these issues with the Applicant, who has agreed to amend the submittal to reflect these concerns. The specific conditions related to the Design Guidelines are discussed later in this report.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Background**

On October 14, 2002, the Mayor and Council, after two Public Hearings, approved PRU2002-00020, Exploratory Plan Application, for this location. That approval was for 13 single family detached homes on this property. Of this total, there will be 11 new homes, with two of the original three homes remaining. Approval of this Exploratory Plan allowed the applicant to proceed to the second phase of the PRU process, which is application for and approval of a Detailed Application.

The Planning Commission approved the Detailed Application phase of the process, reflecting conditions and restrictions approved by the Mayor and Council, on June 25, 2003. The original proposal for this site was for 18 homes (16 new and two existing), but was amended to 17 during the staff review prior to the first Public Hearing in front of the Mayor and Council. After the second public hearing, the current iteration of the plan, 13 units, was approved.

As part of the Detailed Application approval process, the Planning Commission is required by the Resolution of approval to approve the architecture of the eight homes that are not part of the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. This approval is subject to a recommendation by the HDC, which has been provided.

### **Property Description**

The subject of this application is a 5.35-acre tract of land composed of three properties located on West Montgomery Avenue, directly between a portion of the former Chestnut Lodge site, and six lots of the Roxboro neighborhood. The portion of the Chestnut Lodge site adjacent to this application is a wooded area that is part of the West Montgomery Avenue Historic District. In addition, one of the

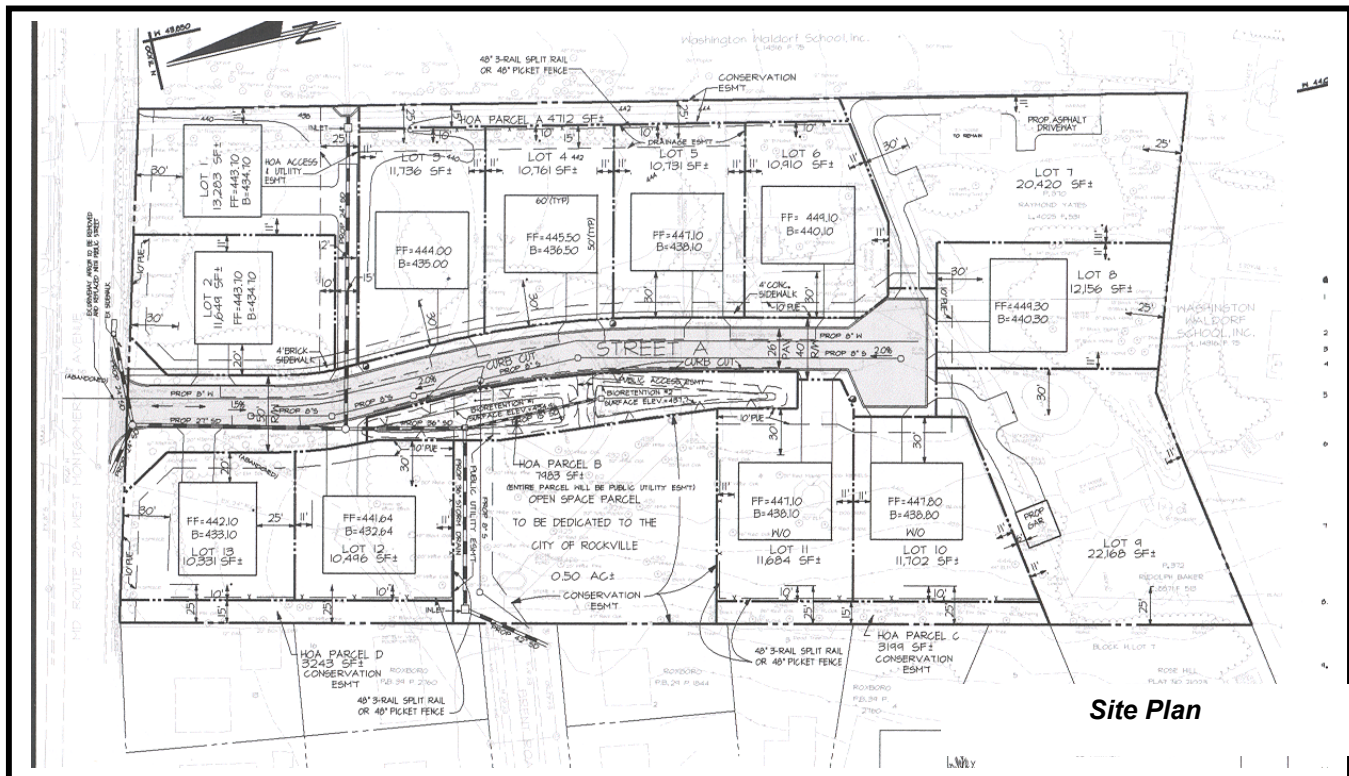
existing lots that is part of this application is adjacent to Lot 7, Block H of the Rose Hill subdivision. The entire subject tract with this application is zoned R-S, Suburban Residential.

The largest of the three properties that make up this application is approximately four acres, and is the closest property to West Montgomery Avenue. The other two properties (the Baker and Yates properties) to the rear of the tract make up the balance of the site. Of these two parcels, the parcel farthest to the west (Baker) is approximately 28,488 square feet and the property to the east (Yates) is approximately 25,657 square feet.

The subject tract is relatively flat, with a low area directly adjacent to the western property boundary, adjacent to Lot 16 of the Roxboro neighborhood. There is another low area that runs parallel to West Montgomery Avenue that drains the Chestnut Lodge site and West Montgomery Avenue. There is also a large stand of significant trees in the general vicinity of the middle of the property, adjacent to the western boundary of the property.

## History

The tract that is the subject of this application has been referred to as "The Buckingham property." That is because for many years Dr. Buckingham, a prominent veterinarian, occupied the property. A sign on the property near the West Montgomery Avenue driveway says "Thirty Oaks," which was a direct reference to some of the significant trees on the property.



## Proposal

The applicant requests final approval of elevations for the eight new homes on the interior lots of this subdivision. The architecture for the three homes that front on West Montgomery Avenue has been approved by the HDC.

## HDC Recommendation to the Planning Commission

At its meeting of February 19, 2004, the HDC unanimously recommended approval of the front elevations for the interior lots of Thirty Oaks. Comments were generally positive, with the Commission commenting positively on the Developer's attempt to incorporate some of the design features of the West Montgomery Avenue houses into the designs of the interior lots.

It should be noted, however, that the HDC only reviewed the front elevations of the homes. Staff has had the opportunity to review supplemental information relating to all four facades of the homes, and has found that there are some conditions that are contrary to the standards outlined within the approved Architectural Design Guidelines.

## Compliance with the Approved Architectural Design Guidelines

The house elevations proposed with this application generally comply with the Architectural Design Guidelines. The following issues related to the Design Guidelines need to be addressed:

1. The Applicant should explore the possibility of incorporating different rooflines to the project. This would include, but is not limited to, the addition of a hip roof or two throughout the project. This could include the inclusion of dormers to some of the "Bartholomew" elevations. (Item 6 of Design Guidelines). Figure 1 shows a Bartholomew model from another NV Homes community that has dormers added.
2. The side elevations of all these homes must have more windows incorporated into the design, as per Item 9 of the Design Guidelines. This is particularly true of Lot 12, which has a side that faces the park. Many of the facades are completely devoid of windows, and this must be addressed.
3. It is unclear from the provided drawings whether compliance has been attained on Item 10, which relates to the trim boards being wide enough to carry the gutter line along the gable to integrate them into the architectural design.



In addition, Staff feels that some additional items need to be addressed with this proposal.

1. Lot 5 is the only house that has a front porch. While not mandated or required, staff feels that at least one additional front porch should be required along Henson Oaks Lane.
2. Staff feels that dormers should be included on at least three of the homes in this community to add some variety to the appearance of the rooflines. Staff feels that the Bartholomew "C" elevation is the most appropriate for this treatment, as indicated by Fig.1.
3. All side elevations should have an architectural feature, such as circular, square, or diamond shaped faux attic vents of the same color as the trim, in order to provide increased variety and visual interest on the side elevations. Applicant should also consider the addition of faux closed window shutters for the same reason.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:

1. Substantial compliance with all items listed above under "Compliance with Approved Architectural Design Guidelines."
2. Provide revised elevations for all facades prior to issuance of building permits.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Staff feels that the elevations of these homes generally comply with the approved architectural guidelines, and the intent of the Resolution of Approval for Thirty Oaks. Staff believes that while these are production homes, the combination of elevation facades, (with the changes referenced above), are appropriate for this new neighborhood. Particularly when combined with the three approved West Montgomery Avenue homes.

While there is not a condition requiring custom homes within Thirty Oaks, the PRU process required more architectural control than is typically required if the PRU did not exist and the property developed within the R-S zone. An example of this is the PRU requirement that footprints of the new homes not exceed 2,750 square feet. While limiting the potential scale and mass, this type of constraint does somewhat limit the ability of a modern production homebuilder to be flexible with certain design features. The applicant has attempted to be flexible with the designs to achieve the City's goals.

Staff feels that this Applicant has been responsive to Staff's comments, and we endorse approval of the elevations subject to the conditions above.

**NOTIFICATION**

Notices were sent to approximately 787 residences, businesses and association presidents.

Attachments